

An Essay

On

Phthisis Pulmonalis

Respectfully Submitted to the Faculty  
of the Homoeopathic Medical College  
of Pennsylvania

By

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## Phthisis Pulmonalis

This form of disease has long baffled the skill of men of the highest medical reputation, and, indeed so little impression, owing perhaps to an imperfect knowledge of the remedial action of drugs, have all the medicines which are usually employed had upon it, in its advanced stages of development as to cause the conviction to fasten deeply and firmly upon the minds, of at least some eminent Physicians, that when vital organs, and especially the lungs were the seat of it, a cure was utterly impossible. Even now, with all the light, which homoeopathy has thrown around this unnecessarily fatal disease - with all the proofs, which it has so amply furnished of its power, if not to cure, to arrest for a time its further progress, there



are many truly eminent Practitioners of our  
own School, who contend that the disease  
is incurable.

Examples, we admit are too numerous. But for-  
tunately for suffering humanity, by the genius  
of Hahnemann, the Medical mind, like  
other mind, has felt the genial influence of  
the spirit of honest inquiry, which is so char-  
acteristic of the action of intellect during  
the present Century; and bursting away its  
chackles, has darted forward on its path of  
independent and fearless investigation.

Subjecting the opinions of Antiquity to the test  
of reason, which if found to be in accordance  
with that reason, have been retained and still  
more ardently venerated, while those <sup>the</sup> whose  
value <sup>of which</sup> has only been derived from the fact  
of their antiquity, have been abandoned and  
discarded with as little regret, as the harsh



and ruinous treatment formerly made use of for the cure of Tubercular Consumption.

The science of medicine has presented to the investigation of this awakened medical mind no more important or interesting subject than that which has reference to tubercular disease, nor is this strange, when we consider that so much suffering and distress result as a consequence of the ravages of this disorder, and how life is, if protracted, rendered (especially by Allopathic treatment,) a scene of weariness, pain and distress, through the influence of this prolific source of suffering.

The object perhaps we should say formerly of many skilful Physicians, who were doubtless as deeply affected by the suffering of their patient, as <sup>by</sup> the inexorable character of the disease, seems to have been merely to palliate and smooth the passage of the diseased one



to the grave, without expecting to effect a cure.  
It has <sup>however</sup> been suggested, though very carefully,  
not really as an opinion, but as a thought,  
worthy at least of consideration, that while  
disease is the result of some specific principle  
or miasm, which affects the organism in a  
manner peculiar to itself, that there is a cor-  
responding fixed, morbid principle, agent or  
germ, somewhere in nature designed by a benig-  
nant Creator for its cure. If this be true, and we  
admit that it is at least plausible, we have in  
futuro the grand and imposing triumph of Homo-  
eopathy rendered entirely complete, over, not only  
Tubercular Consumption, but every other <sup>stigma</sup> system of the  
healing Art.

The importance of this opinion evidently depends  
greatly upon the views which we form of "Similia"  
It is believed by some medical writers, that in  
Medicine there are analogies, but no identities.



Here it may be assumed lies, we think from well  
ascertained facts, which have been determined  
by actual experiment, the error of a very large  
number of homoeopathic Physicians. If there is any  
one fact more certain and reliable than any  
other, it is the fact, that drugs act as curative  
agents in disease, only so far as they are capable  
of producing the same state or condition. It is  
true, that there are a variety of opinions  
respecting the homoeopathicity of drugs. Feste  
remarks with regard to this self-evident prop-  
osition, that natural maladies, as well as  
drug diseases, have their primary and their  
secondary symptoms, and that it is not  
sufficient that a drug in order to be really  
homoeopathic to a given disease, should be  
capable of producing symptoms similar to  
those of the natural malady, but that  
the alternate effects of the drug and those



of the disease must develop themselves in the same order. The law of "Similia Similibus Curantur" implies, not merely a relation of similarity, but a relation of identity between the action of the medicinal agent and that of the malarious principle of disease. Hence, we conclude, that in order to treat any disease successfully the Physician must understand its pathology and the medicine which will produce the same identical difficulty.

Phthisis is doubtless a curable disease, and perhaps there are medicines known to homoeopathic Physicians, which if prescribed with scientific accuracy according to the principle of "Like, cures like," will prove curative in every case, at least, as far as a cure is possible. This disease, though of a formidable character like other diseases, will yield in all probability to proper treatment. The weight of authority unfortunately is largely



against this opinion, but if the invincible properties of Affinity and Correspondence were impressed as a condition upon all matter, why not medicines act as efficiently in this, as any other form of disease? Even admit, that there are no remedies with which the Profession are acquainted, that can be relied on with certainty by the most accurate observers, they are somewhere in nature and only require the ordinary industry of a Hahnemannian to discover them.

*Phthisis Pulmonalis* has been so frequently and minutely described by pathologists, that it is unnecessary to enter upon a further explanation of its pathological character, except so far as necessary to develop its primordial Condition. The disease is owing to the development in the lungs of a peculiar substance, called tubercle. But without pausing to consider their nature



or in what their essential character consists, we shall merely allude to the opinions of pathologists as to the primary seat of tuberculous matter for the purpose of explaining the reason why we believe the remedies which, though usually employed by homoeopathic Physicians, but not continuously, we shall recommend are really homoeopathic to the disease.

The seat of tuberculous matter has been a subject of dispute among pathologists. There are some, who regard the mucous surfaces as the principal seat of tuberculous matter, while others, assert, that tubercles are simply enlarged lymphatic or absorbent glands, but the prevailing opinion however, among pathologists now is, that the seat of tuberculous matter is the cellular tissue of organs.

These opinions, however important to the pathologist, if we examine them, clearly point to an important



primary Condition, which if carefully borne in mind will render the disease in the hands of a homoeopathic Physician subject to the Control of remedial agents, unless Complete disorganization has taken place. The want of success heretofore in the treatment of this disease has unfortunately led homoeopathic Physicians, like others, without Consideration to believe, that the disease was incurable.

The Course of treatment, has been, it is true, unsettled, unsatisfactory, and unsuccessful, but then, no Homoeopath should, because others have failed to prescribe homoeopathic remedies successfully in this disease, hesitate to push his investigations and experiments a little further in order to reduce the practice in this as well as other diseases to a mathematical certainty. Hahnemann has laid it down as a rule, (and this, if understood will lead us to consider pathological Conditions.) I quote however, from recollection, "That Symptoms are relieved inversely as



they appear." This is true, but in the treatment of tubercular consumption no more fatal error can be committed than to prescribe, though it has been done, for symptoms as they appear during the progress of the disease. Hahnemann, we apprehend did not mean to say, that homoeopathic Physicians were to prescribe for the symptoms, which were lastly developed, but that the symptoms which occurred last, were less likely to be permanent, from the fact, they were more difficult to excite, <sup>e.g.</sup> Nausea and vomiting — vomiting may be relieved, while nausea is not.

Remove the cause of disease and the symptoms or its effects will cease in an inverse order from which they appeared.

The view then, which we would here maintain with regard to the opinions of pathologists respecting the seat of tuberculous matter is, that the primary condition, whether the mucous surfaces, lymphatic glands or areolar tissue of organs are involved is, dependent,



primarily upon one and the same cause. Capillary  
engorgement. This condition, however true, is not, we  
are aware, if regarded as a uniform pathological  
condition which requires throughout the entire pro-  
gress of the disease the use of the same remedies,  
free from objections. It is generally supposed,  
that remedies which are applicable to the infla-  
mmatory, are useless in the suppurative or ulc-  
erative stages. But we think, it will be admitted,  
that in either of the latter stages of the disease  
there is at least a sub-acute-inflammatory action  
going on which requires in alternation with  
some specific, when we say specific, we mean  
those medicines which have a specific rela-  
tion to the cause of the disease, the administration  
of those remedies which control under ordinary  
circumstances inflammatory action.

It would require a separate treatise to  
enable us to notice the various theories res-



pecting the exciting and predisposing causes of the disease. especially the predisposing, or even to give a birds-eye-view of the characteristic indications which Authors have laid down more or less empirically, for some forty or more different remedies, which are considered appropriate to the first, second and third stages of the disorder. Therefore, as we have indicated sufficiently, if nothing more; first, the necessity of noting causes and pathological conditions; and secondly, the homoeopathicity of drugs, we must here content ourselves by presenting a brief view of the remedies upon which we should rely principally for the cure of the disease.

Therapeutics. For the treatment of Phthisis various remedies have been recommended, all of which, may be useful at times, though we are inclined to think, that they are seldom

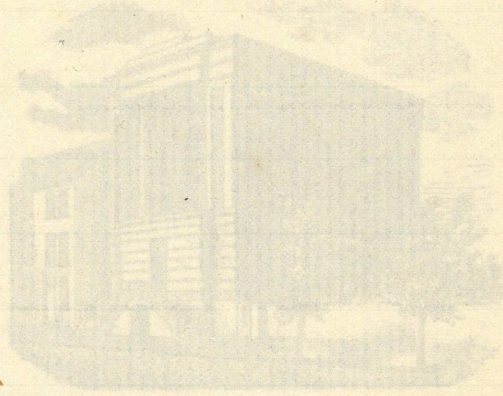


if ever all required in the treatment of the disorder. The principal remedies are however, Aconite and Belladonna. It is upon these two remedies that we must rely in order to overcome Congestion. Congestion may arise from either, one of two Conditions, either from an excessive flow of blood by the arteries, or from a slow and imperfect return of blood to the heart by the veins. If from the former, Aconite is the remedy for there is no remedy known to Homoeopathic Physicians which is Capable of Controlling the Arterial Circulation, like Aconite, and it must yet play, we think, decidedly a more important part in the treatment <sup>of the disease</sup> in all <sup>its various</sup> stages of ~~the disease~~, than it has done heretofore. But if from the latter, Bell. the action of Bell. unlike Aconite, is specifically upon the venous system, therefore in order to relieve Capillary engorgement it might be necessary to give Aconite and Bell. in alternation. Aconite to reduce the flow of blood to; and Bell. to increase the return of blood from the vessels engorged. Should the disease however, arise from a psoric dyscrasia. Aconite and Bell. may be used simply as intercurrent remedies, either



AN ESSAY ON

to prevent or relieve Congestion, while other remedies which are more specific to the disease are employed, which with pure Air, good diet and moderate exercise, will afford at least, a possibility of cure.



HOMOEOPATHIC MEDICAL COLLEGE

OF PENNSYLVANIA.

For the Degree of Doctor of Medicine

On the ~~thirteenth~~ day of January, Eighteen Hundred and

Fifty eight

By *L. J. Howard*

Of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania